

LONG ISLAND FORUM



South Haven Pond and Mill

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PAUL BAILEY, *Publisher-Editor*

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Old South Haven Mill

The South Haven mill was first owned by the Homan family along with a mill at Yaphank and a tide-mill at Baiting Hollow. Daniel Homan had a farm at Yaphank, later "the old Gerard Place". It was at the lower millpond, now a game preserve. In January 1771 he received a grant for a grist and sawmill. He received three quarts from every bushel of grain ground. Daniel ran the lower mill and Ebenezer Homan a fulling mill.

Mrs. Charles Hawkes' notes on the Homan family: "To Capt. Robert Homan, Feb. 17, 1739, grant for upper mill at South Haven". Osborn Shaw, Brookhaven Town Historian, notes that this mill granted to Robert Robinson was probably never run by a Homan. In 1797 it was owned by Christopher Swezey.

I am pretty sure that Mordecai Homan, born 1757, owned the mill at South Haven where a large family of Homans lived and are buried in the old church graveyard and in their private burying ground.

The Homans were succeeded by the Carmans at this mill. Samuel Carman Sr. (1740 - 1821) married Theodosia, daughter of Mordecai Homan. Samuel Carman Jr. (1789-1869) married Catherine, daughter of Joseph Homan. The last miller at the South Haven mill was Jeremiah Dominy, who succeeded Samuel? Glover.

These scattered notes may bring out more information on the old South Haven mill, whose epitaph should read: "Destroyed by Progress".

Edna Valentine Bruce
Brookhaven

Note: This, we believe, is the millpond in which Daniel Webster fished while boarding at Samuel Carman Jr.'s farmhouse. Editor.

The Brooklyn Bridge was officially opened May 24, 1883, although several groups of distinguished special guests walked the span on several previous occasions.



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Highways, Fords and Bridges

ONE can readily appreciate that geography has had a great effect on history and economic development, and the early roads on Long Island offer a good example. The first roads, we are told, were laid out in 1704, and were very primitive, little more than wagon trails. No doubt they followed Indian trails in part, but as we examine the routes of some of these roads, we see that the object was to afford a means of communication from one end of the Island to the other, without any specific goal. The general lack of industry, and the fact that the Sound and Atlantic Ocean were used for such commerce as existed, rather than the roads, may account for the fairly direct routes that these roads took.

Let us take, for example, the middle island road, known as Fulton St. in Brooklyn, farther east as Jamaica Ave., then as the Hempstead-Jamaica Turnpike, again as Fulton St. or Ave. in Hempstead. This road started out bravely inland from the Ferry, and then proceeded eastward, at first to avoid low-lying hills to the south, along the present Eastern Parkway, after which it kept south of the low hills at Cypress Hills, obviously keeping to level ground as nearly as possible. From Jamaica eastward, a route was chosen to keep it on the Plains, north of the woods and swamps, so that no clearing of land nor filling of swamps would be necessary.

In following this route, a number of streams had to be crossed, but in most cases, they were dry stream beds, or perhaps small streams in wet weather which were easily forded. When the glacier melted at the end of the Ice Age, it left behind its sand and gravel as a terminal moraine to form the North Shore hills. The waters rushed southward toward the sea as the ice melted, carrying the lighter particles with them, and this outwash plain became the Hempstead Plains. The streams made shallow valleys, more prominently as they progressed southward, and served to drain the plains. Most of the rainfall soaked quickly into the

Felix E. Reifschneider

sandy soil and flowed underground, the streams in these valleys being below the ground surface and the valleys dry. Farther south, the underground water level intersects the surface and we had surface streams.

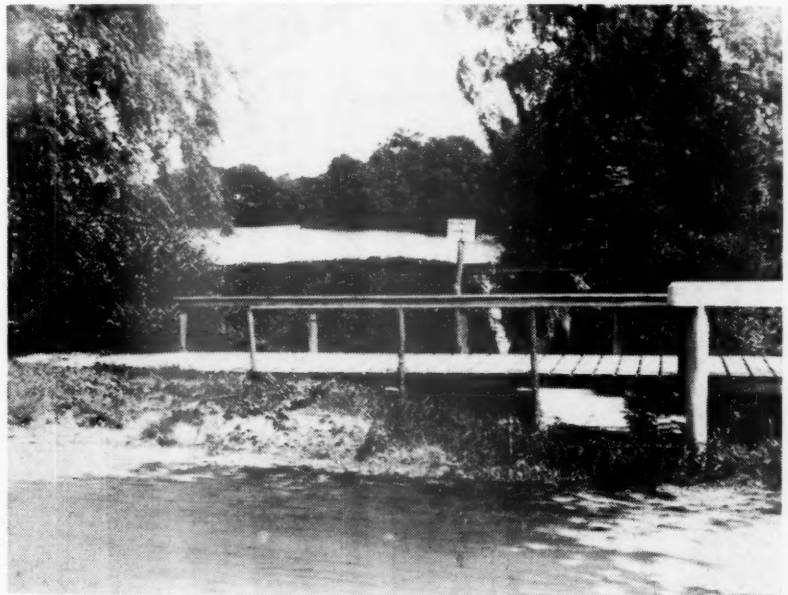
The first such valley was crossed at Elmont, altho there was no settlement there at that time. This was near the head of the valley, which is drained by Simonson's Creek or Forest Stream. Just east of later-to-be Franklin Square, the second valley was crossed, which was drained by Doxsey's Brook or Foster's Brook, as many of these streams have two names or different names at different points along their course to the sea. While this brook was one of the longest, it is the only one which was not tapped as a source of water for the Brooklyn Water Works on Long Island, perhaps because the valley drained was narrow and did not furnish enough water to make its development worthwhile.

The next valley eastward, just east of Munson, is the only one to have been named, being called Cherry

Valley. Farther south it was drained by Pine's Stream. Next came a broader and shallower valley drained by two streams, variously known as the Rockaway Stream or Horse Brook. Numerous ponds were located on these two brooks, and the site of the settlement of Hempstead was probably chosen because it was the nearest point to the Plains where the cattle and sheep could graze and at the same time, running water was available to drink.

The two brooks united south of Hempstead to form Parsonage Creek, along which three dams were built to form three mill ponds (Nichols', Oliver's, and DeMott's ponds with grist mills also bearing their names). These were later combined to form the Hempstead Reservoir. Several miles east of Hempstead the road crossed the East Meadow Brook in a very shallow valley. The crossing here and the two in Hempstead must have been fords originally.

The South Country or Merrick Road was built as far south as possible, while still keeping north of the marshland, and also far enough north so that the streams could be forded. The road crossed many



Jones Pond Outlet, Massapequa, 1895

more streams than did the middle island road. The valleys which were dry farther north were drained by the streams the names of which we have mentioned previously, as well as many additional streams which rose south of the more northerly road, which were (naming them from west to east) Baiseley's Stream, Springfield Stream (or Thurston Creek), Clear Stream, Valley Stream, Millburn Stream and a large number of others east of East Meadow Brook at least as far as Westhampton. Many of these streams were much larger, some attaining the dignity of being called "rivers". We have not named all the streams and brooks that the South Country road crossed, even in the (old) Queens county, as many small brooks have names which are known only locally.

Between Jamaica and Hempstead, south of the middle island road, there existed a great wooded area known in Revolutionary times as the Hempstead Swamp. This area was drained by Clear Stream, Valley Stream, Foster's Brook, Pine's Stream, Schodack Brook and Parsonage Creek, the latter sometimes being known as Mill River south of Rockville Centre — as well as some smaller streams. Schodack Brook has not been mentioned before, because it rises south of the middle island road and joins Parsonage Creek before the latter crosses the South Country road. However, Schodack Brook may have received more publicity than any other stream on Long Island, as it flooded one wintry day and caused the Southern Railroad Disaster at Woodfield on February 3, 1875. Surely no other stream on Long Island has been responsible for such loss of life. The flood is more remarkable because it occurred a very short distance south of the source of the brook.

How this beautiful area earned the name of "Hempstead Swamp" is hard to see. The writer roamed thru almost every foot of the territory fifty years ago as a boy, and most of it was heavily wooded and dry as a bone, good solid ground underfoot. There were soft places along the banks of the brooks at some spots, and small swamps at the head of some of the ponds. It is known that the underground water

Continued on page 14



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Local Patriots of the Revolution

AMONG the many Long Island patriots of the Revolutionary era, were some who are not as well known as others.

Rufus King was born in Maine in 1755, and entered Harvard College, but interrupted his studies at the outbreak of the Revolution to serve as aid-de-camp to General Sullivan. After the war he resumed his studies and graduated. He was a delegate to the old Congress that met in Trenton in 1784, and represented Massachusetts in the Constitutional Convention of 1787. He also served in the Massachusetts legislature.

He came to New York in 1788 and he and General Schuyler became the first Senators from New York in the U. S. Senate. He was appointed Minister to Great Britain by Washington in 1796 and served through the administrations of Adams and Jefferson. He bought a 30 acre estate at Jamaica in 1805 and moved there the following year. He was again appointed Minister to Great Britain in 1825 but became sick on the way across and returned the following year.

He was a kindly, cultured gentleman, a graceful public speaker, and a public servant for over forty years. Although he did not altogether approve of the War of 1812 he pledged his credit and fortune to the service of the government. He died in Jamaica in 1827 and is buried in Grace churchyard. His estate is now a public park, and his mansion a museum. His son, John Alsop King was Governor of New York State from 1857 to 1859.

Why did General George Washington select the son of a Long Island clergyman as his aid in the Revolution? The answer to that question can be found in the record of Benjamin Tallmadge. The son of the Rev. Benjamin Tallmadge, he was born in the parsonage at Setauket in 1754 and prepared for Yale by his father. He commanded troops during the Revolution and enjoyed the implicit confidence of his Commander-in-chief. He never undertook anything without con-

John Tooker



sulting his chief and getting his approval.

He conducted a raid on Long Island coming across the Sound from Shippan Point and landing at Old Mans (now Mt. Sinai) where he crossed the Island to Fort St. George, captured its garrison, returned to Coram where he burned 300 tons of hay stored there for British forage and escaped with his prisoners to Connecticut without losing a man. Washington, not wishing to sacrifice men, had given a rather reluctant approval to this exploit but warmly commended Tallmadge when he returned. Tallmadge was promoted to Lt. Colonel and retired from the army with the rank of Colonel. He served sixteen years in Congress after the War.

There are many others whose public service deserves more notice than we can give here; Ezra L'Hommedieu for instance, and Zephaniah Platt who also served in the Continental Congress, and a host of men who filled various local offices many of them without re-

muneration, all worthy of a place in the hall of fame.

There seems to be a movement on foot at this late day to pay some honor to them. We have two boulevards on Long Island named after the signers of the Declaration over which thousands of motorists ride who know not why they are so named.

What about the Long Island women who lived in those stirring times, the mothers and wives who kept lonely vigil at home while sons or husbands were absent on public business? Such a life called for courage and resourcefulness, and we may be sure that they possessed those qualities in great measure.

Think of Mrs. Francis Lewis left alone to face all the indignities that the British soldiers could heap on her because her husband had signed the immortal Declaration. She was a real martyr to the cause of Independence.

Another conspicuous example of feminine courage was Ruth Woodhull, wife of the General and sister of William Floyd who signed the Declaration. Ruth was two years older than her brother, and ten years younger than the General when she married him in 1761. When the General lay dying in the house of Nicasius De Sille at New Utrecht in 1776 his loyal wife loaded a farm-wagon with provisions, took what money was on hand, and drove the seventy miles to New Utrecht. She reached there before her husband died, and at his request the money and provisions were distributed among his fellow prisoners.

On her sad journey homeward with her husband's body she must have been stopped often by the British pickets who had overrun the Island by that time. She buried him in the little cemetery at Mastic and erected the plain marble slab that in a few simple words eloquently tells of his character. Their only living child Elizabeth was first married to Henry Nicoll, and later became the third wife of General John Smith.

Ruth Woodhull, sister of the

General, was born the same year as his wife (1732), was the second wife of William Smith 2d and died in 1822 at the age of 90. Abigail Nicoll, daughter of Matt-

hias Nicoll, married Richard Floyd 2d and became the grandmother of William and Ruth Floyd. Mary Floyd, daughter of William Floyd, the signer of the Declaration, was

born in 1764, married Colonel Benjamin Tallmadge in 1784, and died in 1805.

These are only a few of the brave women of Long Island who should be gratefully remembered by posterity for helping their fathers, husbands, and sons to give us a nation.

Mascot Moved in 1908

Having read of old Mascot House in a recent issue of the Forum, I was interested to read in the Fifty Year Column of the Patchogue Advance, from the November 20, 1908 issue of that fine weekly, that "The Nassau Oyster Company has purchased the old Mascot building and has moved it to the foot of Rider avenue to use as an oyster house." I doubt that it is still there.

Henry Partingham, East Meadow.



General Woodhull's Grave at Mastic

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Bunkers By the Million

APTAIN Bert Edwards of the fishing steamer *Vesta* had been out of port south for several days, looking for menhaden, or bunkers as they were called by the fishermen. Up to three P. M. on the third day of a trip in the late summer of 1902, he had caught no more than 10,000 fish.

We were cruising in Block Island Sound just south of Gardiner's Island when the mate who was on the lookout up aloft sighted a large school of bunkers. He reported through the speaking tube to Captain Edwards that the fish were headed in an easterly direction.

The steamer was worked up nearer until the whole crew could see an exceptionally large body of fish. They were so closely packed that they threw off a deep red color.

The driver boat, manned by Harry Udell, a brother-in-law of Captain Edwards, was dropped off to watch out for any change of direction the fish might make. This boat took up a position at the rear of the school following right on their tails as they were swimming seaward. His job was a most important one, usually rated as the fourth officer.

The scale on this type vessel was Captain, Mate, Pilot, Fish Driver, Cook, Seine Thrower, and in the Engineer's Department, Chief, Second Engineer, Oiler, Firemen. The cooks on most steamers were elderly men, with long experience on the Grand Banks and coastal vessels, perfectly competent to take over the wheel in an emergency.

Captain Edwards gave the order "Lower away your boats." These boats were carried on davits, the Captain's on the starboard side, and the Mate's on the port side.

When they struck the water we all jumped to our places at the oars. The Captain and Mate stood well aft in their own boats with steering oars. Not so easy a job to man

Capt. Eugene S. Griffing

the boats in a rough sea, but this day there was not a ripple on the water.

Just before we dropped off in the boats, I overheard the Captain ask the Pilot, Captain John Vail, if the chart showed any hidden rocks in this vicinity, to which the Pilot answered, "Yes, there are. We are directly over the Greenhill fishing grounds with submerged rocks some fathoms below."

The entire crew thought this would make it impossible to set our purse seine over the rocks, with a strong ebb tide running seaward very fast. Of course, under those conditions we would not only lose all the fish, but the purse seine as well. But no order was given to stop, so we pulled away on the oars.

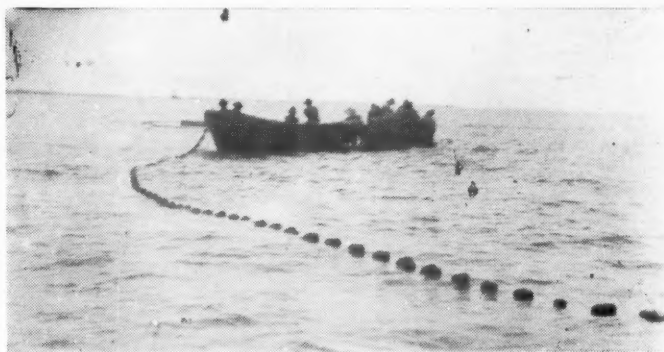
Captain Edwards was not the type of man to give up easily. To

our surprise, instead of surrounding the whole school, which we usually did, he ordered one of the boats to veer into the school a short distance, then come right out and tie up to the purse boat. The crew shipped their oars and jumped into the purse boat.

At this moment the Captain and Mate usually threw the "tom" over the side. To commercial fishermen, the tom is a large round moulded piece of lead with a flat bottom; weight about 200 lbs., I should judge.

Two snatch-blocks are attached to it through which the purse line runs in rings attached to the bottom line of the seine. After the seine had surrounded the fish, all hands pulling on this line would purse the net up at the bottom. The top of the seine net is supported by round corks.

On this occasion no tom was



East End Bunker Fishermen in Action, 1830s

Capt. Eugene S. Griffing, retired contractor and banker, spent his younger years as a commercial fisherman in Southold town and writes from his experience as such.

thrown overboard. The pressure of a large number of fish found pockets to hold all we needed to load the steamer. Gradually they were pursed up without the tom. To my mind, the Captain had performed a most unusual feat. He caught the fish and saved his seine from being ruined on the rocks below.

Having raised an oar to signal the Pilot to bring the steamer up to the net, Captain Edwards handled the scoop net, which was steam hoisted by our engineer, Daniel Wilkenson. About a thousand fish were dumped aboard the steamer with each dip of the net.

With the hold filled, pen boards were put up leading from the hoisting room to the cook's galley so that the waist of the steamer was filled to a height of six feet. Then, finding he could not possibly get another fish aboard, Captain Edwards ordered the whistle cord tied back to give a steady blast. The captain of any fishing steamer hearing it knew its meaning, to come alongside as we had more than we could handle.

As no vessel showed up, however, we had to dump enough fish back into the sea to fill another steamer. If memory serves me rightly, the Vesta carried into Pro-

mised Land that night 350,000 bunkers. Our officers agreed there must have been over a million fish in that school and more than half our crew, including myself, had thought we should have surrounded the entire lot. But Captain Bert Edwards knew better.

Some up-State Forum subscribers may think this an exaggeration. But at that time one fishing steamer, the Walter Adams, had a hold capacity of a million fish. She had to carry a double crew of 50 men and four large seine boats on her davits.

There is real excitement in all kinds of fishing, from small menhaden to a whale, and Captain Bert was just as good at killing whales. The fishing smack Almira, of which he was captain, was owned by Captain Ike Edwards (father of Judge Leroy G. Edwards, well known counselor at law, Mincola.)

It was my good fortune to serve a few years later as captain of the Almira.

"Richard Smith and the Bull"

The above poem, by Paul Bailey, which appeared in his book, "Historic Long Island in Pictures, Prose and Poetry," published in 1956 and now out of print, is again available.

In large type, on heavy card 8½ by 11 inches, with sketch by Les Elhoff, suitable for framing, it may be purchased from the Long Island Forum, Amityville, at 50 cents postpaid (three for \$1).

Pamphlets by the Forum

The Forum has a limited number of the following pamphlets, for sale at \$1 postpaid:

The Talented Mount Brothers, by Jacqueline Overton.

Long Island's First Italian, 1639, by Judge Berne A. Pyrke.

L. I. FORUM INDEX

The Queens Borough Public Library sells a complete index of the Long Island Forum for the years 1938-1947 inclusive, at \$1 postpaid. Also for the years 1948-1952 inclusive, at 50 cents postpaid. They may be obtained by writing to the Long Island Collection, Queens Borough Public Library, 89-14 Parsons Boulevard, Jamaica 32, New York.

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"Anting" Is For the Birds

THE word Ant used as a verb appears to have no dictionary status yet the word is employed to express the occurrence of an action. The noun Ant is the only use of the word that I have been able to find dictionarywise. Now suppose I were to pick up ants and rub them in my armpits in an effort to delouse myself, for lack of a better word to describe the action I think I would say, "I am anting myself." The expression would be highly descriptive and not likely to cause confusion as to meaning.

Not being a bird in the literal sense, I do not believe I shall be doing any anting, but the birds have anted for a long, long time. It is instinctive with them and does not need to be taught generation to generation. They know that when real hot weather arrives, they must find ants. The birds have never let it be known exactly why they ant, we can only watch them at their anting and try to figure out a reason.

There is not much printed material on bird anting for people have made scattered notes and records in a rather hit and miss manner. Edwin Way Teale, of Baldwin, mentions it several times in his book "Circle of the Seasons". He details observations he has made of anting in his own backyard and sets forth his deductions and conclusions. It is highly interesting reading.

Not so long ago I was cooped up in my backyard following an interlude in the hospital. I had time to really see the interesting things going on in my 60 x 159 piece of ground. I could sit in a very easy beach chair as long as I wanted and then up and wander around the 'estate' entirely at my leisure. I think I had my field glasses hung around my neck the whole time. They really helped to see things. It was not long before I transferred my activities to Jones Beach and then time moved easily and very lightly.

The bird anting held my attention for days both in my backyard and at Jones Beach. I saw plenty

Julian Denton Smith

of it. I do not know why I had never noticed it before because birds have had bugs forever, I suppose. I sometimes fail to see the most obvious thing!

The first incident to make me think about bird anting came through the strange antics of a young bluejay. It dropped down into the cinder driveway in front of my garage. That is an old piece of cinders well pulverized, loosely packed and partially overgrown with grass and low weeds. The

bluejay hopped about and suddenly picked up something in its bill, lifted one wing at a most peculiar angle, and rubbed what it had picked up briskly and deep into the feathers under the wing.

When the rubbing ceased, the wing remained extended at a crazy degree giving the bird a strange, laughable unhinged look. My mother had a good word for it - crampsided. Then some of the tail feathers separated and spread apart with no two at the same angle in a misshapen and deformed way.

Continued on page 12



Woodcut of Canada Goose

by Loring W. Turrell, M. D.

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About County Fairs

In the year 1762 Long Island had no rainfall from early May until November, and the consequent yield of corn and other crops was reduced to a minimum. As a result, agriculture and farming in general became a paramount subject.

So much concern was felt over the scarcity of food that a society was formed the following year to encourage the improvement of methods used in farming. On the 21st day of December 1767, this society awarded a premium to Thomas Young of "Oysterbay" for having set out an extensive apple orchard. By this act a precedent was established for awards earned by using a more advanced farming technique. From then on, farmers would vie with one another for the honor of having grown the better crops as, needless to say, the winner could demand a higher price for seed raised by him and sold to others.

On May 5, 1841, the New York State Legislature passed "An Act to promote agriculture" and of the \$8,000 appropriated, \$97 was allotted to Suffolk County. This was one of the first moves by the State to advance the role of agriculture. Encouragement thus given created competition between Suffolk farmers and eventually brought about the annual fall exhibits.

Although the "Fairs" are mentioned in the history of Suffolk as early as 1818, we find very little evidence of local interest or enthusiasm for those events until October 16, 1843, when an agricultural fair was held at Commack. Then in 1845, Smithtown received the honor of sponsoring the event, and on October 10, 1848, when the meeting was held at Huntington, a new constitution was adopted for The Suffolk County Agricultural Society.

Not to be outdone by her western sisters, the town of Greenport held the fair in 1849. Then Babylon sought the limelight and offered free transportation from the railroad station to her fairground on September 24, 1850. In 1851 the Society returned to Smithtown, but the following year found the display of selected farm products back at Huntington.

Very likely the constant shifting of locale in the early years was brought about by the mode of travel which prevailed at that time. If the fair was held at Greenport, west-end exhibitors found it a real

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Continued from Page 10

journey by horse and wagon, at an average speed of five miles an hour, from one end of the county to the other. To drive such distances over poor roads, stopping occasionally to tighten a cinch or loose trace or to adjust the fly-net on the horse, would tend to dampen any pent up ardor for a social day at the fair.

Enthusiasm apparently waned for several years, or perhaps the war interfered, but in 1865 a new constitution was formed and in 1866 an enlarged display was held at Riverhead. Two years later the grounds for the fair were laid out in that town and in place of the tents previously used to house exhibits, more permanent structures were built on a twenty-acre tract of land. By this time people had somewhat outgrown their aversion to train travel and as Riverhead was a more central point it became the final headquarters for the society.

With the civil war ended, Long Island grew more important as a source of food for a growing New York City; as a consequence, the annual exhibits became very popular. Nearly everybody attended and many a youth saved his pennies during the long hot summers at the turn of the century so that he might buy a train ticket and pay for his admission to that display which, to him, seemed like something out of this world. To see the afternoon trots; the vegetables larger by far than those grown at home; the newer kinds of fertilizers; the prize fowl and animals with a blue ribbon tacked over pen or stall; the new sulky cultivators and elevator potato diggers; those were the thrills of the fair.

In 1870 horticultural exhibits were included in the former exclusively agricultural displays. 1877 brought to public view the work of the schools, and gradually the fair grew in magnitude and scope. The railroad offered incentive awards for prize vegetables, well knowing the encouragement of greater production on the farm would bring increased revenue in the transportation of the product to the city.

Possibly as a result of this, farming received an added impetus and in the State census of 1865, we find that Suffolk's greatest crop was corn with 16,460 acres producing 580,000 bushels. Potatoes also were well on the way toward the present

Continued on Page 17

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Continued from page 9

The bird picked up something again and rubbed it vigorously deep beneath the wing. This was repeated twenty-one times.

The wing and tail went back into place with a series of flutterings and the opposite wing and tail section slowly angled out to an unnatural, absurd and out-of-balance position. The bird again picked something up in its bill and rubbed it energetically far under the wing. The action repeated eighteen times. The bird flew off into the grape arbor and flapped its wings and flipped its tail repeatedly and then flew away.

As soon as the bluejay had left the ground, I moved over to the spot. Eight ants were on the ground. Five squirmed and kicked and three were dead. The five

straightened themselves out and ran off, apparently totally revived and reorganized.

During the day more bluejays of various ages arrived and anted in a similar manner. I never again saw one bird ant one side of his body before starting to ant the other side. All birds with the exception of that first one did it in a haphazard fashion — an ant or two on one side, then an ant or two on the other side. No more than two bluejays ever anted at the same time. No jay made the least attempt to dust himself with any loose cinders.

Late in the afternoon a pair of wood thrush came from under the grapes near the anting area. Thrush are retiring birds by nature and these two were extremely slow and cautious in approaching the spot.

At long length one of them finally picked up an ant and went through the same posturings as the bluejays. The other thrush gave all appearances of doing sentry duty. It stayed at a distance and seemed unusually alert and watchful. When the anting thrush concluded the activity, the other bird carefully hopped to the place and proceeded to ant and the first bird took up the job of lookout. After the second bird had finished anting, the two thrush simply slipped into the background — thrush have a way of disappearing like that.

I watched the spot several times each day. The ground was filled with ant holes and ants were always there in good numbers. I do not know one ant from another but the birds know all about them, especially the exact kind for the anting operation.

On other days I found more birds anting at the place in front of the garage — robins, redwings, grack-

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les and starlings. The starlings love to do things in a gang probably because they delight in an argument or fight — they can make the worst assault-and-battery over one slice of bread of anything I know. Yet when it comes to anting, they do it as individuals. If there were two starlings at the job they would surely fight over one ant and spoil the anting.

One afternoon I sat in the backyard slowly making way with a tall glass of iced tea. The thought came to me to see if those birds would ant themselves with anything other than ants. My tea had a slice of lemon in it. I broke this up in small pieces and found the used tea bag in the garbage pail. I scattered the lemon peels a few feet beyond the site of the anting and emptied the tea bag on my side of the anting. Starlings had been anting and now one of them dropped down at the spot. It saw the lemon and picked up five pieces going through the anting ritual with each piece. Then it hopped over

to the tea leaves and hesitated. Finally it tried one and seemed satisfied that everything was okay. It concluded a lengthy anting with the tea leaves. So birds will use more than live ants for their anting.

A neighbor tells me she has seen robins in the act of anting but instead of using ants, they were rubbing themselves under their wings with camphor chips. The neighbor had brought her clothing storage bags from the attic and had cleaned them out in the yard. The robins found the chips almost immediately.

At Jones Beach I saw robins, starlings and redwings anting at a spot in the lawn on the ocean side of the West Bathhouse. These birds did exactly as those at home. I came upon one robin anting on a concrete walk on the north side (street side) of the West Bathhouse. This bird picked its ants from a crack in the cement sidewalk. The crack had been filled with black asphalt but ants made it a runway. I wish I had had my camera along that day for certainly

I saw a picture of a lifetime.

For many years investigators were not sure what happened to the ants. Somehow they had missed the injured and the dead ants on the ground at the place of anting and had thought the ants were tucked away deep down in the feathers. This missing of the injured and the dead ants must have resulted from too few people reporting the incident as surely someone must have seen that important item.

After it was learned that the birds did not deposit the ants in their plumage, men wondered more than ever about the action. The thought developed that apparently the rubbing or the squeezing of the ants in the bill of the bird caused the ant to exude formic acid which the bird used to repel or to rid itself of lice.

When you see birds acting like crazy, assuming grotesque, deformed and fantastic positions and vigorously rubbing something among their feathers, you are likely witnessing an old, old rite of birds

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called "anting." Look closely for maybe you will see something that other people have failed to notice and that may lead to a fuller understanding of exactly how anting works.

From the number of times this article has had to use the word Ant other than as a noun, it seems it should appear thusly in a dictionary, doesn't it?

Continued from page 4

level has been receding on Long Island, slowly, for many years, but did it recede enough between the late 1700's and the early 1900's so that a swamp became solid ground?

The North Country road, on the other hand, kept as far north as possible, while still keeping south of the heads of the numerous bays and harbors on the north shore, altho it was necessary to cross small brooks at the heads of these same bays and harbors.

In order to appreciate the importance of these roads to the growth and development of Long Island, one must think back and realize that not a single settlement of any size existed at the beginning of the 20th Century that wasn't located on one of these three highways, plus perhaps the later Jericho Turnpike and the Long Island Railroad. While the railroad contributed a great deal to the growth of the villages, it probably was responsible for less than 10% of the villages being settled, as more than 90% of the villages east of Kings county were settled along the four great east-west highways, the location of which was dictated almost entirely by geographical considerations.

About Bloodgood Cutter

I enjoyed Charles J. McDermott's article on Bloodgood Cutter very much indeed. The farmer-poet is buried in Zion Episcopal Churchyard, Douglaston.

I have a copy of John Gay's "Poems", published in 1753 in London, which once belonged to Mr. Cutter. This book has in the front the names of two former owners: William Duthie in 1793, and Bloodgood H. Cutter, 1880, Edinburgh. The book was later owned by the late Charles T. Vincent, an English-born actor and playwright who lived in Glen Cove and was much interested in local history.

Bloodgood H. Cutter wrote some verses to commemorate the celebra-

tion of Glen Cove's 200th anniversary in 1868, although William Cullen Bryant, who also lived on Long Island at the time, declined an invitation to do so.

Peter Van Santvoord, Glen Cove.

Passing the Forum On


We enjoy in full every issue of the Forum. Guess you'd have many more subscribers if it wasn't passed on so much. One subscriber told me that his Forum is passed on to seven other families, then returned to him. Captain Wilbur A. Corwin, Bellport.

Note: It's a good idea. We'd like to hear from others who pass it

on. We've heard of one copy that goes regularly into three different states. Editor.

M. Louise Forsslund


The Forum performed a timely service in running Mr. McDermott's story about Sayville's best selling novelist M. Louise Forsslund at the turn of the century. I was afraid she would be forgotten entirely in this age of TV and atom bombs. I knew her as Louise Foster, her real name, and also as Mrs. Charles C. Waddell. Elizabeth F. Farley (a long ago summer resident of Sayville).




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When the Telephone Was Young

I THINK it was just about the turn of the century when Setauket had its first telephones. The contract is among my father's old papers but I cannot lay my hands on it just now. There were four subscribers — my father Selah B. Strong, my uncle Thomas S. Strong, Miss Annie Tyler at the store which stood opposite the Setauket post office, and the Setauket station. Our central was Port Jefferson, and the first three were marked Post Jefferson. Only the station was marked Setauket. Be-

Kate W. Strong

cause of that last, they suggested we should pay toll when calling the station, but my father objected to that.

Our number was 23-R, and 4 calls. The Misses Randall were the operators at Port Jefferson Central. Their father loved to call my father up, give him all the latest news and discuss politics. The line came on poles set in the water beside the bridge. The company supplied all poles except one in our yard. That we supplied at first. Later the company replaced it with their own at a cost to us of \$25.

Of course in time as the telephones increased, Setauket had its own central. As we had had the telephone for some years, I cannot understand the following letter, evidently an answer to an inquiry of my father's; but it seems to be interesting so I will include it here: "The North Electric Co., Cleveland, Ohio, April 18, 1904.

Mr. S. B. Strong, Setauket, L. I., N. Y., Dear Sir:—

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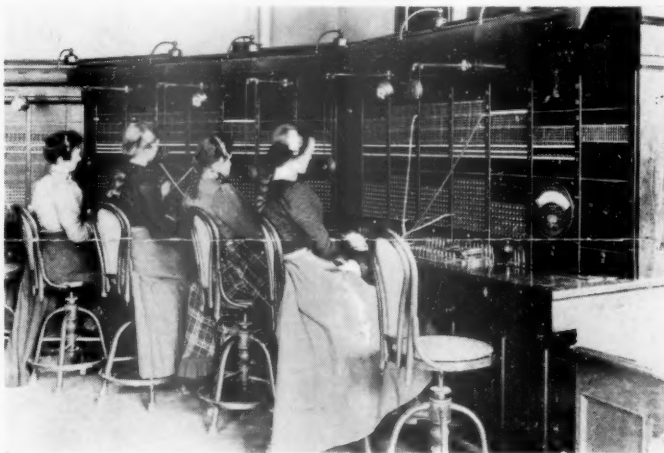
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Yours very truly,
The North Electric Co.
A. A. Miller"

In 1913 father was staying with one of the officials of the telephone company in Atlanta, Georgia. As father was worried about some conditions at home, he suggested that father call our house, but from New York came word that the Long Island lines were too weak to carry a message from such a distance, and the message had to be relayed.

Some years afterwards we were sitting at the dinner table during a thunderstorm. There was a sudden crash and a maid came in screaming that the house was on fire. Lightning had struck a transformer in the yard and blown fuses kept the lighting system from coming into the house.

The lightning had burned off the insulation on the wire coming into the house (which was what the maid had seen), wrecked the inside of the lightning arrester, ruined the bells on one telephone, and burned out the inside of the other with a nasty smell of burning rubber.

At that time we had a radio, powered by two large batteries outside the case — "A" battery was

Continued on next page

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Continued from Page 16

powered by the house current, "B" was a regular battery. Both were ruined. In those days the loud speaker was a separate piece, attached by a cord to the radio. We had a large, very expensive one, and it cost \$17 to have it repaired.

Years later I was alone in the house when early one afternoon the telephone started ringing, and I had to answer it at frequent intervals. Always the inquiry was the same: "Where was my cousin, Judge Selah B. Strong? . . . his house didn't answer." In vain I explained his family had gone to town for the winter and I didn't know where they could reach him. Still the calls kept coming. Most people were polite but one woman was furious, because I couldn't produce my cousin as a conjuror takes a rabbit out of a hat.

At 9 o'clock a jolly young reporter called me (It seems they were all reporters) and when I told him what had been going on he explained that the judge had that morning married a couple about which there was much notoriety and the newspapers wanted details. He said I would be catching it until the papers went to press, but I had other ideas. At that time the telephone had two bells on the outside of the box. If you slipped a piece of cardboard between them they wouldn't ring. I called central, told her what I was going to do, and went to bed. I heard afterwards that someone (I expect that woman) complained that Setauket Central didn't cooperate. The complaint was passed on to me, and I told them that central had done everything in their power to accomplish the impossible.

In the old days the central

operators were local people who knew us all. Nowadays they are voices . . . always courteous, but unknown. I certainly miss the old days in that respect, but such is progress.

Continued from page 11

output, 3,439 acres being devoted to that product with a harvest of 292,000 bushels. In 1869 cauliflower was first raised here for market. Much of this product was transported by the railroad and the fertilizer needed for increased growth was sent to the farm the same way.

The years brought changes, including imports from other states, and gradually the fair lost its savor. Automobile racing, sideshows and other carnival-like features began to replace the true function of a noble plan and finally the old fashioned county fair in 1941, with 19,460 visitors, held its last display. The Suffolk County Agricultural Society thereafter ceased to hold annual exhibits, and brought to a close an era of local history.

But that contributor to Suffolk's growth has left an impression which still lingers in the hearts and minds of a passing generation. Although a school building with attendant grounds now occupies

the last stronghold of the society at Riverhead, that county-wide institution created at least one place-name. If you should glance at a map of western Suffolk, circa 1900, you will find, instead of the present Huntington Station, bold type designating the place as Fairground.

Roy E. Lott, Huntington Town Historian.

Island's Blockades

Long Island's south shore has been blockaded three times — first during the Revolution, again in the War of 1812, and finally in the spring of 1925 when Simon R. Sands, superintendent of the 4th Coast Guard District, declared a blockade of both the Fire Island and Oak Island inlets "to stop, board and search every vessel of every description entering the waters of Great South Bay through either of the above mentioned inlets" in a vain effort to halt rum-running.

Wilmot M. Smith of Patchogue, who became Supreme Court Justice many years later, while a student at Cornell as a young man wrote the words of its alma mater song, "Far Above Cayuga's Waters."



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Shepard Mount Portraits

Two portraits of William Sidney Smith and his wife, Eleanor Jones of the Manor of Longwood, hung for a time in the front hall of my grandfather's house. He was William Henry Smith, eldest son of William Sidney and Eleanor Jones Smith. They were painted by Shepard Mount. They now hang in the front hall at Longwood, the ancestral home (near Yaphank).

A sister of the late Miss Jacqueline Overton (author of *The Talented Mount Brothers*) held high position in the New York Public Library forty years ago when I was an assistant librarian there.

Mrs. Robert G. Hurley, Bellport.

Example For a Fashion Career

Coats that cover all needs and all ages are illustrated here, including the "Polar Bear" (lower left) that made a cover picture for a noted magazine. They are all designs by Victor Joris, one of the newest successful young designers to win the distinction of the term, "arrived," in New York. His story is that after completing his first collection for the firm of Petite Miss, of which the four coats shown here are part, Joris, under thirty, is already a favorite with fashion editors who have featured his designs editorially in leading publications. He arrives now via Hollywood, Paris and Traphagen School of Fashion . . . went to Traphagen at seventeen from Shreveport, Louisiana, and after graduating in 1949 set off for Paris where he worked for several houses in the couture, came home to serve a two-year stint in the U. S. Army, and returned to design via the costume department of Columbia Pictures before Petite Miss in New York got his name on a contract.

Designer Joris has now taken his place in the "Successful Students" display at Traphagen, where he is in company of Galanos, Estevez, Anne Klein and Helen Lee, all former students who won the Coty Award four in a row. This display section is part of the Fashion Career Exhibit specially arranged at Traphagen for the month of January, prior to the opening of the February term in the School's Art and Clothing Construction Departments. Interested young people and parents are welcome to see, without obligation, examples of the accomplishments that bring success in many types of careers in fashion. The school, at 1680 Broadway (52nd St.), New York, is open 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. weekdays, Saturdays until 5.

Not Dewey's Flagship

Your contributor is in error about the armored cruiser Brooklyn (November Forum). She was Commodore Schley's flagship at Santiago, Cuba. Dewey's flagship was the protected cruiser Olympia. Her funnels were not hit but there were several hits on the funnels of the Brooklyn.

John W. Brewer, Quaker Hill, Pawling, N. Y.

Wants Mill Picture

From about 1865 to 1875 George Williams owned a farm with water-powered gristmill at Ridgewood, on what is now Hill road in Wantagh, L. I., where I was born February 23, 1869, his youngest son.

The mill disappeared about 1900 and I would like to find a picture of the mill from which I can have a painting done, to leave to my family.

Oliver Williams, "Dawn Hill", Cornwall Ridge, Ct.

Cover to Cover Reader

I read every issue of the Forum from cover to cover, and my sister in Florida to whom I send a subscription each year writes me frequently how much she enjoys it. * * * Capt. Wilbur A. Corwin sure writes some very fine articles for the Forum. Capt. Bob Newins, Patchogue. (Capt. Bob is president of Hunters' Garden, founded in 1838).



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Patchogue Memories

I was interested in the letter of Louise Budd Edwards in the October Forum about Patchogue of 50 and more years ago. I too remember Lance Still's stage that ran on Ocean avenue in summer between the Mascot on the bay and Ginocchio's corner on Main street.

I can look back further than that, however, to the years between 1876 and 1883 when Norton Jones drove a small stage from Grove avenue to the village. My grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Garret Dunbar, lived near Bay avenue and Carman street. My sister and I and our mother lived with them. Before Ginocchio's store, Matthieu's fruit and vegetable store stood there. Hammond & Mills' big general store stood opposite on Ocean avenue. McBride's drug store was on the northeast corner of North Ocean avenue and Main and on the northwest corner was Fishel's large department store, later Swezey & Newins.

The Mascot House had a bench

on the outside, running its length where one could sit and watch the bay and boats. I recall the old Smithport and Ocean Avenue Hotels. My sister and I attended the Patchogue school before and during the long term of Dr. Wellington E. Gordon, Principal. I was about ten years old when our family moved to Connecticut. I enjoy the Forum so much and pass it along to other folks at our Home. Mary Barteau L'Hommedieu, King's Daughters & Sons, Inc. George and Westport Avenues, Norwalk, Ct.

Knew Inventor Robinson

The article in the November Forum by Wilbur A. Corwin was of much interest to me.

In about the year 1898 my father, A. W. Silkworth of Brooklyn, rented a summer cottage next to Oliver Hazard Perry Robinson at Bellport. If my memory is correct the cottage we had belonged to the Robinsons and during the summer they lived in the old house next door.

I was about seven years old at the time so maybe it was the summer of 1898. Anyway, I spent many happy days, probably annoying Mr. Robinson as he worked on various wheels and ball bearings in his shop. I had the pleasure of riding on that four wheeled velocipede. Mr. Robinson also had one of those old fashioned bicycles with the huge front wheel and small rear wheel.

The photograph in the Forum looks exactly like the old gentleman looked as I remember him.

The following summer we came to Mattituck and rented the Sybil Young cottage for two seasons. It is now owned by the Jacksons. We paid \$40 a month rent for the place but there were no conveniences. Oil lamps, outside pump which was a killer to pump in order to get a trickle of water. Our family enjoyed good times during those

years. It took my father two days to drive his horse and surrey from Greenpoint to Mattituck.

A. H. Silkworth, Mattituck.

When the Suffolk County Farm Bureau was organized at Riverhead in 1917 it was the second in the State, the first being in Broome County, founded six years before.

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